



Match Report

Opponent: Johns Hopkins University

Date: 9 OCT 05

First Match: Navy 22 JHU 0 A Side
Second Match: Navy 36 JHU 5 B Side

Navy Division II Rugby hosted Johns Hopkins University Sunday on Hospital Point. Both teams started the game aggressive and eager. In the first ten minutes of play JHU drove Navy back twice and attempted two field goals, both of which were no good. On the very next drive, Navy was within five meters of the JHU try zone. Scrumhalf Richard Brooks was carrying the ball through the JHU defense when a penalty was called against JHU. He attempted a quick tap penalty and rushed for the try line and was stopped by the JHU defense. The referee awarded a penalty try for his efforts and JHU's inability to retreat before engaging Brooks. Adam Young kicked for points after, bringing the score to 7-0, Navy.

JHU came out with a purpose on the next series. They pushed the Navy defenders back to their own try zone, but again failed to make a goal. Navy's Adam Young booted the ball from inside the try zone to create some space between JHU's offense and Navy's try zone. JHU responded by kicking the ball three times for touch and driving to within the Navy 22 meter line. Navy's

defense again proved superior as Young gained possession of the ball and broke for a thirty meter run down the pitch just before halftime.

The second half saw a stronger, more organized Navy effort. After a desperate and failed JHU field goal attempt from the 50, they again drove to within ten meters of the Navy try line—but Navy's strong-side wing Arthur Griffin had a different plan for the ball, as he ran it back to the 50. Navy's offense brought the ball to the forty, giving Young the chance to kick another penalty kick, making the score 10-0, Navy. Immediately after the ensuing kickoff, Brooks and Mott had an impressive exchange down the pitch that ended with Brooks scoring a try. Young kicked and gained the extra points. Score: 17-0, Navy.

The next drive down the pitch by JHU was again stunningly stifled by Navy's defense. After pushing JHU back from their own five meter line, Navy prop Brent "Tex" Birchum ran in for Navy's next try, slamming the ball across the try line in an impressively determined effort. Young's kick was no good, however, leaving the score at 22-

0. But JHU had some fight left in them and drove down the pitch one last time. Navy's defenders stopped the drive just outside the try zone, and then booted the ball back to the 50. With the score well in Navy's favor, the team simply kept JHU from scoring until the game's end.

In retrospect, Navy started strong in the first half, but had some trouble taking the JHU ruggers down initially, which allowed them to get close to scoring. However, thanks to the tenacity of Navy's defenders, JHU was denied any points and Navy was able to take the ball to the other end of the pitch, time and again. In the second half Navy was more aggressive on defense and could not be stopped offensively. Final score: Navy 22, Johns Hopkins 0.

In the B-match Navy got off to a dream-like start when hooker David Allen broke free of two defenders in the third minute. Johns Hopkins scrambled to make the tackle on the line, leaving the referee to call the try after deliberating the possibility of the ball being held up. Fly half Ethan Berg's conversion slipped wide of the uprights (Navy 5 – John Hopkins 0). Five minutes later Berg cut through with a clean ball off a Navy line out on the five meter line and added the conversion to make it Navy 12, Johns Hopkins 0. Several successive breakdowns put Navy deep into John's 22 as scrum-half Andrew Chess swung the ball out wide where 8-man Clayton Sears was waiting

to place the ball down for a try. Berg converted a tough kick from the left side (Navy 19 – John Hopkins 0). The Navy pack emerged as the dominant force in the game, led by the front three combination of Dunbar, Allen, and Sweeney. The result of a pick and drive in the seventeenth minute put Allen over for his second try of the match. No conversion (Navy 24 – John Hopkins 0). Sears, suffering from strep throat, found himself in the middle of the action once again, diving over the line only to be held up by a persistent Johns' pack, who somehow scrambled the ball away to the touchline. Ten minutes before half time Navy found themselves camped inside the JHU 22, a pattern that would continue for much of the match. Another Navy try before half time seemed inevitable. It came four minutes prior to the break when the Navy backline pushed the ball wide to fourth-class David Christenson at inside center, who sold the dummy to break through the Johns' defense and power down the line. The JSU broken defense tracked back to make the tackle, but Christenson's momentum took him over the line for Navy's fourth try of the game. Berg had just enough to convert before the referee whistled for half time (Navy 31 – John Hopkins 0).

Navy picked up where they left off in the second half, with fourth class flanker Rucker Culpepper claiming the ball from the kick off and making a powerful run up the center of the field. Seven minutes into the half Johns Hopkins claimed a breakaway try

against the pattern of play, amid confusion as to whether the Johns' winger had stepped out of play. The failed conversion left the score at Navy 31 – John Hopkins 5. JSU gained momentum as two successive penalties conceded by Navy gave them rare access to the Navy 22. Navy kept their composure and a turnover at the lineout allowed scrum-half Chess the opportunity to clear the danger. Navy progressively made their way back down the field, thanks to the excellent rucking skill of the Navy tight five, notably with the efforts of the second row combination of Harper and Sladek. Fourth class flanker Iaian Blamey also displayed power in what proved to be an intensely physical game. This phase of play culminated with 8-man Sears peeling off the back of the scrum only for the ball to be turned over and cleared out from the JSU try-line. JSU's only threatening look came on one occasion before the end of the game, when a deep kick into Navy's half was chased down by the JSU backs. Replacement fly-half Smith collected the ball and proceeded to slice his way through the Johns' defense, only to be stopped short of the ten meter line. Navy sealed the victory two minutes from the end with a moment of brilliance from the Navy backs. Christenson caught the pass from Smith, was tackled then offloaded the ball to Chess who baited the Hopkins' wing and then floated the ball out to outside wing Tyson Metlen giving him only the JSU fullback to beat. Metlen

proved wiry and edged the fullback out for the try, slamming it down on the left side of the try zone. In a moment of reverie the team decided to let lock Dunbar attempt the conversion--it was just barely wide left. The match ended shortly thereafter, the Mids victorious over Johns Hopkins, 36-5.

~ A Chess reporting